

March 12, 2009

Education Committee
Room 3100,
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Sirs,

I am a parent of two boys with autism. I am writing to ask you to support Raised Bill #6666, Section 7.

My sons, like many children with autism, have received teaching using the method called Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). Not all children require ABA. However, as one of the teaching methodologies with substantial research and data regarding its efficacy, the use of ABA in schools has grown dramatically in the 12 year that I've been involved in special education.

What is critical about this bill is the requirement that ABA be taught with fidelity, requiring oversight by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Too often, I have seen schools put a teacher, who has had only a brief training session on ABA principles, in charge of a child's ABA program. Although these teachers are well-intentioned, they do not have the significant training or experience required to effectively oversee and implement an ABA program properly. This leads to ineffective teaching, poor behavior management, and the child's education suffers accordingly.

Both IDEA and No Child Left Behind have a strong emphasis on the qualifications of staff working with our children. Requiring BCBAs to oversee ABA programs is in alignment with this philosophy.

Thank you for your support on this important bill!

Sincerely,



Marina Derman
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Westport, CT 06880